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STATE ANNOUNCES OPENING OF NEW TEDDY EBERSOL'S RED SOX FIELDS AT LEDERMAN PARK

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced that the newly-restored Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields at Lederman Park will open for youth soccer and other site appropriate activities on Tuesday, September 5.

Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields at Lederman Park on the Esplanade include two youth baseball/softball diamonds, a youth baseball diamond, a T-ball area, and youth soccer fields. Renovations for the fields include a new drainage system, irrigation system, lighting donated by Musco Lighting, a manual scoreboard similar to Fenway Park's Green Monster, new park benches, portable bleachers, and a new backstop.

The restoration was accomplished as a result of a new public-private partnership between the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and three nonprofit organizations: the Red Sox Foundation, Hill House, and The Esplanade Association, who will also form the new Friends of Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields. Funding was raised by these nonprofits and EOEA, through its Office of Public Private Partnerships "Fix It First Friends" matching program. Construction costs totaled approximately \$2 million, of which over 1.8 million was raised by the nonprofit partners from private donors. Jumpstarted by a lead gift from Red Sox Chairman Tom Werner. This is the largest public private partnership with a state environmental agency in the history of the Commonwealth.

"The partnership we have created through our Office of Public Private Partnerships will greatly benefit the youth in the Boston area. The fields look amazing," said EOEA Secretary Robert W. Gollodge, Jr. "I am proud to be a part of this team and I look forward to continuing our work with these partners in the future."

"As stewards of the Charles River Basin, I'm very pleased with the results of this public-private partnership," said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. "The newly renovated fields will provide much needed additional recreation options to youth."

The partnership also extends to field maintenance: donations to the Friends of Teddy Ebersol's Red Sox Fields will supply funds annually to supplement DCR's basic field maintenance activities. Dick Ebersol, chairman of NBC Sports and his wife Susan St James, the parents of the late Teddy Ebersol, recently announced they will match up to \$500,000 in funds raised by the Red Sox Foundation and Friends Group for the field maintenance endowment to ensure the fields are available for future generations. The fields, located along the Charles River in Lederman Park are named after an avid young Red Sox fan who died in a plane crash shortly after the team's 2004 World Series victory, but stand in memory of all those who love youth athletics and our public parks and were taken from us too soon.

The youth baseball/softball fields will be lighted and available for night use with a permit that includes fees for electricity. The fields are open to the public for permitted uses, Tuesday through Sunday, and are scheduled for field maintenance on every Monday in season. To encourage use by a diverse range of area youth, 30% of field time has been reserved exclusively for parties living or headquartered further than one mile from the fields. DCR has formed an advisory committee, which includes representatives from the three non-profit partners, area organizations providing youth recreational activities and adult recreation leagues, to counsel it to ensure equitable scheduling and access to diverse user groups for use and enjoyment of the fields according to DCR's Field Specific Policy.

Due to the excessive rainfall experienced during construction, the turf became infested with fungus and new sod had to be installed. In order to allow the new sod to properly root, the use of the youth baseball and T-ball areas will not be available for play until Spring 2007, and a temporary fence will be left for several months to ensure the sod's protection. The use of other fields will be regulated to ensure turf protection. Additionally, DCR will repair the sidewalk between the fields and Storrow Drive over the fall/winter season.

Permitting is done through the Dept of Conservation and Recreation. Scheduling request forms field use may be downloaded from DCR's website at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/fields.htm>, or can be obtained by calling 617-727-4708 x.404. For those seeking more information, a public meeting on permitting for Fall 2006 will be held on Thursday, September 14 at 6:30 pm at the Hatch Memorial Shell on the Esplanade.

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